

private owners of both inland sites for help with my visits and for providing background information and Phil Porter, Assistant Lincolnshire Moth Recorder, for investigating and supplying Rick Pilcher's records.— PAUL WARING, 1366 Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough, PE4 6LS (E-mail: paul_waring@btinternet.com).

Moth trapping at Kingsham, West Sussex, 2000

I live on an arable farm surrounded with mature hedges at Kingsham, near Chichester, in West Sussex. Although adjacent to the A27 trunk road, there is no street lighting and no other light sources for some way to the south. For the two years we have lived here, I have trapped most nights from spring through to late autumn and have made some interesting observations.

For the first time last year, I looked at plume moths (Pterophoridae). Guided by an old borrowed copy of Beirne (1952. *British pyralid and plume moths*), but relying on confirmation by the county recorder, I actually ended up with some good records. *Agdistis bennetii* is an extremely local species confined to the south-west corner of the county. There have only been four recent sightings in Sussex, between 1990 and 1996, but I recorded three singles on 5, 7 and 20 August.

Amblyptilia acanthadactyla is another very local species with only a dozen records since the 1930s, all during a '90s "revival". Three singles found their way into my trap, on 13 and 26 August and 1 September. *Stenoptilia bipunctidactyla* has been presumed extinct in West Sussex since 1955; I caught one on 4 October. *Merrifieldia tridactyla* is a Vulnerable, very local species entirely restricted to chalk in Sussex. There have been six modern records in the county, the last in 1991. Unfortunately my specimen got separated from its slip of paper and I cannot be certain of the date.

Euzophera cinerosella is a fairly distinctive pyralid. The larvae feed in rootstocks of Wormwood *Artemisia absinthium* and pupate in a burrow in the pith of an old stem. One moth in my trap on 8 August turned out to be the first county record of this species. Co-incidentally, or not, I also trapped two Wormwood Sharks *Cucullia absinthii*, on 15 and 19 July, the first West Sussex records since 1980.

One last micro of interest: There have only been about a dozen records of *Nephoterix angustella* in Sussex. I recorded one in my parents' garden near Worthing, West Sussex on 19 September 1998 and I was lucky enough to record another here at Kingsham last year, on 24 July.

Varied Coronet *Hadena compta* spread from Kent in the 1950s and although recorded regularly in East Sussex from the 1970s, only reached Arundel in West Sussex in 1992. Interestingly, none were caught here in 1999, but 9 were attracted to m.v. light between 15 June and 19 July 2000.

Probably the most exciting event for me in 2000 followed on from the arrival of two Striped Lychnis *Shargacucullia lychnitis* in my trap, one on each of 16 and 21 June. I had noticed Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum* growing alongside the A27 road at nearby Aldingbourne and I visited the site on 17 July, when I found 33 larvae. A call to the County Ecologist to check that the verge was not going to be mowed resulted in the disastrous news that it was in fact to be drained, narrowed and used as a vehicle parking area for road works! Urgent action was called for, and on 21 July I took 14 larvae, the first of which pupated the next day. I took another 60 larvae from the site and all are currently overwintering with me. Striped Lychnis is a Nationally Notable species and, interestingly, the first British record came from Arundel, West Sussex in about 1842. Many larvae were collected in the county in the 1940s and 50s, but the species declined from the early 1960s. In 1991, an English Nature review found less than 30 larvae in Sussex and searches in 1994 and 1995 proved completely negative. Oddly, there had only been four confirmed records of the adult stage in the county, although I encountered a further singleton in my trap at Kingsham on 16 June 1999 and my records from this year were augmented by one from nearby Donnington on 18 June. Hopeful signs, if only verge cutting could be curbed!

Finally, on to migrants. I had a reasonable year for commoner migrants including Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella*, with 4,906 between 1 May and 13 October, and a maximum of 996 on 19 June. Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella* amounted to 4,664 individuals between 2 June and 14 October, with a maximum of 939 on 7 August. Just seven Gems *Orthonama obstipata* were recorded, but it was a magnificent year for Vestals *Rhodometra sacraria*, with 77 between 22 June and 6 October. Eight recorded on 26 August was a good total, but did not prepare me for the 31 which surrounded the trap the following morning. Twenty-one were recorded on 28 August, but numbers dropped back down to four the next night. Although the totals of White-speck *Mythimna unipuncta* were low compared to other sites with only nine recorded, 35 Small Mottled Willow *Spodoptera exigua* was a good number for the south-east with records between 20 June and 8 September. Small numbers of both Scarce Bordered Straw *Heliothis armigera* and Bordered Straw *H. peltigera* were trapped, but it was a poor year for Silver Y *Autographa gamma*, with just 473 between 23 March and 15 October, and with a maximum of only 24 on 25 June.

The two migrant highlights were a rather worn Great Brocade *Eurois occulta* on 7 August and an immaculate Dewick's Plusia *Macdunnoughia confusa* on 8 October – the third record for Sussex. – SARAH PATTON, Eastern Cottage, 2 Watery Lane, Kingsham, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 2XH.